

Today's News - Thursday, August 12, 2010

- Weinstein weighs in on architectural "greatest hits" lists and why they should be mocked.
- More on NYC's 9/11 museum: "it is still a construction site. But it was easy to visualize the intent of the spaces, clearly articulated by the acute voids created by the fallen towers."
- How to save Cleveland (and other dying cities): it's time to stop grasping for thin straws and "the same frayed ropes" like building convention centers, light-rail systems, stadiums, etc.: "If the basic definition of insanity is trying the same thing over and over again while praying for different results, then huge swaths of urban America are certifiably nuts."
- Could Hong Kong use some New York-style urbanism (i.e. mechanisms for community input)?
- Victorian-style model towns: the wave of the future?
- Buffalo is not alone in discovering its "battered 19th-century buildings are not eyesores or obstacles," but resources that need to be protected and preserved.
- A Californian architect plans a very green Millennium City for Ghana.
- An international shortlist vies for Edmonton's 500-acre City Centre Airport redevelopment into a sustainable, transit-oriented community.
- In India, vernacular architecture and indigenous building traditions continue to be relevant, despite the hype about globalization and modern materials and design.
- Montana builders switch gears from mega-homes to portable housing (@ \$2/sq. ft.!) for Haiti, Africa, and elsewhere.
- A Seattle avenue to be transformed "from a non-descript city street into a welcoming pedestrian corridor."
- NASA to go LEED Platinum with its greenest facility ever "with some good old-fashioned methods - recycling and Dumpster-diving" (along with gopher tortoises, historic windows, and "one last, endearingly cheesy touch").
- Berlin begins testing trees from the south as native species show signs of struggling with warming weather.
- We couldn't resist: Woodman on BD's 2010 Carbuncle Cup winner: it won "for services to greenwash, urban impropriety and sheer breakfast-extracting ugliness" (ouch!); he's not much kinder to the runners-up's either.

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Why "Greatest Hits" Lists by Architecture's Stars Should Be Mocked: Transferring the musical or cinematic "greatest hits" list mind-set to architecture is deleterious, and here's why. By Norman Weinstein - ArchNewsNow

9/11 museum going up in NYC offers raw experience: It is still a construction site. But it was easy to visualize the intent of the spaces, clearly articulated by the acute voids created by the fallen towers. -- Davis Brody Bond Aedas [images]- Associated Press/AP

How to Save Cleveland: Turning around America's dying cities is difficult, improbable, and necessary...they tend to work the same frayed ropes over and over again: building convention centers that will never make money, betting the farm on light-rail systems that always underperform, shoveling tax dollars at stadiums...that don't generate any new revenue, redeveloping the waterfront. By Nick Gillespie - Reason Magazine

A Caution on Hong Kong Envy: Despite the impulse to marvel at Hong Kong's sophisticated planning for and investment in infrastructure and urban density, might people there welcome some New York-style urbanism? ...New York's mechanisms for community input...imperfect as they are, may themselves be worthy of a little envy from concerned citizens facing top-down urban planning regimes. By Norman Oder [images]- Urban Omnibus

Back to the future with Victorian-style model towns: Planners are going back to the ideals of Victorian model towns to meet the present-day challenges of community cohesion and environmental sustainability..."The answer is to design and develop cities for their environment, and give people as much choice as we can in their lives within the city." -- Diamond Architects; Arup; Foster + Partners - Guardian (UK)

Plan needed to protect our old buildings: The evidence is indisputable: Battered 19th century buildings are not eyesores or obstacles. They are resources...can be used to spark commerce, to revive downtown neighborhoods and to make people money. Simply out of self-interest, they need to be protected and preserved. By Donn Esmonde [link to video]- Buffalo News

Local architect planning 'green' city in Ghana: Millennium City will be the first fully green city in Africa...Renewable energy and recycling will be used to create a green city in a country that suffers from a severe shortage of housing...will be built to LEED standards... -- Heathcote & Associates; Eldridge Hammond - The Acron (California)

Five finalist firms from around the world to compete to redevelop Edmonton's City Centre Airport land: ...will compete for the chance to deliver the winning plan to redevelop the 216-hectare site into a sustainable, transit-oriented community. -- Sweco International; Perkins + Will; KCAP Architects; BNIM; Foster + Partners - Canadian Architect

Home-grown solutions: Despite the hype about modern materials and design, indigenous building traditions still continue to be relevant...Does globalisation signify the end of vernacular architecture?...Not necessarily. Vernacular architecture...has continuing relevance. -- Benny Kuriakose; Sriram Ganapathi/KSM Consultants [images]- The Hindu (India)

Portable Housing, Made in Montana: When the economy slowed, builders in Bozeman went from constructing mega homes to one-room houses priced at about \$2 a square foot. -- Bob Sterling; HabiHut; BSB Design; U-Dome; World Shelters [images]- New York Times

Sheraton Seattle plans Seventh Avenue 'garden walk': ...will transform 7th Avenue from a non-descript city street into a welcoming pedestrian corridor -- Gustafson Guthrie Nichol- Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle)

NASA Goes Green and Platinum: ...the new Propellants North Administrative and Maintenance Facility, at the Kennedy Space Center, will be its greenest facility ever...with some good old-fashioned methods - recycling and Dumpster diving. -- Steven Szabo/Jones Edmunds & Associates - Metropolis Magazine

Flora for a Hot Climate: Berlin Eyes Exotic Trees in Response to Warming Weather: ...testing trees from the south as native species show signs of struggling with increasingly warm temperatures. Instead of limes and oaks, the city could soon be filled with Judas trees and Daimyo oaks.- Der Spiegel (Germany)

Strata tower wins 2010 Carbuncle Cup: For services to greenwash, urban impropriety and sheer breakfast- extracting ugliness, we hereby award the 2010 Carbuncle Cup to the Strata tower in Elephant & Castle. By Ellis Woodman -- BFLS (formerly Hamiltons Architects); Renzo Piano; Reid Jubb Brown; Make Architects; TP Bennett [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

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